

Peter G. Rowe

Over the last 35 years, Peter G. Rowe has acted as a formidable scholar in urban studies, a world-recognised design academic, and a powerful voice in the international debate on the cultural production of city space, all the while maintaining his links with the University of Melbourne.

Rowe's long and impressive association with research and education started in Australia in 1969, when he received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Melbourne. Soon after this, he joined the post-graduate program at Rice University in Houston, US, where he earned a Masters of Architecture in Urban Design in 1971. Upon the end of his course he remained in Texas, becoming Project Director of the off-campus research institution Rice Centre for Community Design and Research in 1973, and Program Director of the Environmental Program at the Southwest Centre for Urban Research in 1976. From here he returned to the Rice Centre as Research Director, eventually gaining the position of Vice President in 1979.

His academic career also began at Rice, in 1971, with his appointment as a Lecturer in the School of Architecture, followed by the position of Instructor in 1972, Assistant Professor in 1973, and Associate Professor in 1977. Later he became Director of the same School in 1981, a position he held until 1985, when he received his professorship in Architecture and Urban Design at Harvard University and became the Director of the Urban Design programs in its Graduate School of Design and then, in 1988, the Chairman of the Department of Urban Planning and Design. In 1992, Rowe started his twelve-year-long tenure as Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

At the end of his deanship, in 2004, Rowe was chosen to serve as Education Program Director of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva, a consulting position he held for three years. In this role he undertook a number of important consulting assignments, including coordinating ongoing surveys of architecture, planning and environmental design in the Muslim world as well as analyses of practice in such context. He oversaw the Aga Khan Programs in Architecture at Harvard and MIT as well as the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and acted as liaison with the Aga Khan Historic Cities Support Program. He was also involved in a number of special assignments in development planning for the Aga Khan Development Network.

Although much of his long career has been dedicated to research and education, Rowe has spent significant time working in professional practice, particularly between 1981 and 1987 when he took the role of Principal at Environmental Planning and Design in Houston. At EpiDes Rowe was involved in a number of major projects looking at urban modelling, growth forecasting, environmental impact assessment, urban design and planning and public policy evaluation.

Rowe's engagement with design and planning, however, transcends direct professional participation. Over the last twelve years he has been active on many important international committees, juries and advisory boards around the world, and particularly in China, where he has been providing urban development advice to the municipalities of Guiyang, Hangzhou, Kunming, Suzhou, Wenzhou, and Wuhan. In 2008 he has also served on the Governing Board of the UNESCO World Heritage Institute of Training and Research in Asia and the Pacific Region, and in 2011 joined the University Council of Hainan University.

Rowe's important contributions to the literature in architecture and urban planning and design reflect the richness of his personal history and experiences. Between 1987 and 1993, he published three seminal books on design theory with MIT Press – *Design Thinking* (1987), *Making a Middle Landscape* (1991), and *Modernity and Housing* (1993) – which have become standard references in almost every architecture and urban design program in the world.

With *Civic Realism*, published in 1997, Rowe introduces a theory of public space that will provide the ground for his in-depth analyses of specific places and regions. Yet the full development and import of Rowe's ideas for a generation of theorists and researchers must be gauged in his extensive, multi-translated body of writings on East Asia and China in particular.

Rowe has been recognised as Distinguished Service Professor at Harvard University, where he currently holds the Raymond Garbe Professorship of Architecture and Urban Design. He is also

Honorary Professor at Tongji University in Shanghai, Honorary Professor at Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology, and is an Honorary Member in the Academia dei Benigni in Italy.

In spite of his many competing commitments, Rowe has still managed to find time to engage with the University of Melbourne, acting as Honorary Consultant and Chair for the Committee on Architecture in the periods 1997-98 and 2002-03, and giving a Dean's lecture for the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning in September 2003 entitled "*Shaping the Space of Time in Contemporary Cities.*" In 2000, "*Rule Playing and the Ratbag Element*", his celebrated introduction to the monograph on his Melbourne University student colleagues John Denton, Bill Corker and Barrie Marshall (Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall*, Birkhauser, 2000), provided penetrating reflections on Australia, its architectural practice and urban culture.